

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 02350 01 OF 02 011037Z
ACTION EA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1540
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PEKING 2350

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MPOL CH

SUBJ: HSU HSIANG-CHIEN ON PRC'S STRATEGIC VIEW

1. SUMMARY. DEFENSE MINISTER HSU HSIANG-CHIEN'S
AUGUST RED FLAG ARTICLE IS A COMPREHENSIVE AND AUTHORI-
TATIVE STATEMENT ON CHINA'S STRATEGIC WORLD VIEW.
HSU CRITICIZES THE SALT TALKS AND APPEASEMENT TENDEN-
CIES IN THE WEST, INCLUDING UNSPECIFIED EFFORTS TO
DIVER TO THE SOVIET THREAT TOWARD CHINA. HE ACKNOWLEDGES
THAT SOVIET ACTIONS ARE DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AT
CHINA, NOT ONLY AT THE UNITED STATES, AND THAT MOSCOW
MAY BE TEMPTED TO TRY TO SABOTAGE THE PRC'S MODERNIZATION
PLANS.

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PAGE 02 PEKING 02350 01 OF 02 011037Z

2. TURNING TO CHINA'S OWN MILITARY POLICY, HSU CALLS
FOR ADHERENCE TO THE MAOIST PRINCIPLE OF PEOPLE'S
WAR WHILE MODERNIZING IT TO FIT CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS.
ALL TYPES OF MODERN WEAPONS SHOULD BE ACQUIRED. HE
ALSO ARGUES AGAINST A FORWARD STRATEGY TO COUNTER
SOVIET AGGRESSION, AND CALLS FOR GREATER CIVIL
DEFENSE EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

3. IN A LONG ARTICLE WRITTEN FOR THE AUGUST RED FLAG AND CARRIED IN THE JULY 31 PEOPLE'S DAILY, PRC DEFENSE MINISTER HSU HSIANG-CHIEN PRESENTS A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF THE PRC STRATEGIC WORLD OUTLOOK AND DISCUSSES SOME ISSUES OF CHINESE MILITARY STRATEGY. THE ARTICLE, ENTITLED "RAISE VIGILANCE AND PREPARE FOR WAR," IS PROBABLY THE MOST DETAILED AND AUTHORITATIVE PUBLIC STATEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT SINCE HUA KUO-FENG'S REPORT TO THE FIFTH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS LAST FEBRUARY.

4. HSU OUTLINES THE STANDARD CHINESE VIEW OF CONTENTION BETWEEN THE TWO "SUPERPOWERS", WITH THE US IN "DRAMATIC DECLINE" AND THE SOVIETS ENGAGED IN WORLD WIDE EXPANSION. WHILE HE CALLS FOR OPPOSITION TO BOTH IMPERIALISM (US) AND SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM (USSR), IT IS CLEAR THE LATTER IS HIS MAJOR CONCERN.

5. HSU REAFFIRMS THAT WAR, ALTHOUGH INEVITABLE, CAN BE POSTPONED, AND THE LONGER IT IS POSTPONED THE BETTER FOR THE WORLD. IN ORDER TO POSTPONE IT, ONE MUST ADOPT A POLICY OF STRENGTH, OPPOSE SOVIET STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENTS AROUND THE WORLD, AND AVOID APPEASEMENT, WHETHER OF A MILITARY, POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC NATURE. HE WARNS AGAINST APPEASEMENT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PEKING 02350 01 OF 02 011037Z

THINKING "NO CURRENT IN THE WEST." HE ALSO WARNS AGAINST UNSPECIFIED ATTEMPTS TO DIVERT THE SOVIETS TOWARD THE EAST, AND SPECIFICALLY TOWARD CHINA.

6. HSU IS PREDICTABLY CRITICAL OF EFFORTS TO REACH A NUCLEAR BALANCE WITH THE SOVIETS, WHICH IN ANY CASE WILL NOT PREVENT CONVENTIONAL WAR. HE SINGLES OUT AMERICAN EFFORTS TO REACH A SALT AGREEMENT AS "FRAUDULENT NONSENSE." NO AMERICAN LEADERS, HOWEVER, ARE MENTIONED BY NAME.

7. HSU REFERS TO "SOUTH ASIA AND THE RED SEA AREA" AS REGIONS WHERE THE SOVIET UNION HAS DIRECTED AND SUPPORTED SUBVERSION AND COUPS D'ETAT, BUT HE DOESN'T MENTION SPECIFICALLY EITHER AFGHANISTAN OR SOUTH YEMEN. HE CALLS VIETNAM, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE "CUBA OF THE EAST."

8. HSU CONTINUES THE RECENT PRC TREND OF SPEAKING MORE CANDIDLY ABOUT THE SOVIET DANGER TO CHINA ITSELF. HE WRITES THAT THE PRC IS A SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO SOVIET HEGEMONIC PLANS, AND IS THUS HATED BY MOSCOW. THE

SOVIETS CARRY OUT MILITARY EXERCISES AIMED AT CHINA, PLOT A "SURGICAL NUCLEAR STRIKE" (HE WAI KE SHOU SHOU), AND MAKE DIRECT MILITARY THREATS AGAINST THE PRC. IN COUNTRIES SURROUNDING CHINA THEY CULTIVATE PRO-SOVIET FORCES, SEEK MILITARY BASES, HAWK AN "ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM" AND TRY TO ACCOMPLISH A STRATEGIC ENCIRCLEMENT OF CHINA. RECENT VIETNAMESE ACTIONS ARE CITED AS A PART OF THIS STRATEGY. SOVIET ACTIONS ARE "OF COURSE DIRECTED AT THE UNITED STATES AND THREATEN JAPAN," BUT THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO "INTENSIFYING PREPARATIONS FOR AN AGGRESSIVE WAR AGAINST OUR COUNTRY."

9. THE SECOND HALF OF THE ARTICLE IS DEVOTED TO
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PAGE 04 PEKING 02350 01 OF 02 011037Z

CHINA'S OWN MILITARY POLICY, AND MUCH OF IT IS GIVEN OVER TO DRAWING THE CORRECT BALANCE BETWEEN RELIANCE ON THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF "PEOPLES WAR" AND MODERNIZING THIS CONCEPT TO FIT NEW HISTORICAL CONDITIONS. HSU CALLS FOR FULL USE OF THE MILITIA TO ATTACK ENEMY TRANSPORT, OIL PIPELINES AND LOGISTICAL FACILITIES IN CASE OF INVASION. AT THE SAME TIME, HE STATES THAT CHINA DOES NOT HAVE ALL TYPES OF WEAPONS WHICH THE ENEMY HAS OR MIGHT HAVE, IT WILL BE BEATEN. HE MENTIONS IN PARTICULAR THE NEED FOR THE PLA TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND GUIDED MISSILE TECHNOLOGY.

10. TWO ELEMENTS OF CHINESE STRATEGY ARE GIVEN PARTICULAR ATTENTION IN HSU'S ARTICLE. ONE IS A REAFFIRMATION OF A POLICY OF DEFENSE IN DEPTH, IN

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PAGE 01 PEKING 02350 02 OF 02 011012Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PEKING 2350

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

WHICH INVADING FORCES WOULD BE DRAWN DEEP INTO CHINA AND THEN DESTROYED. HSU SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZES ARGUMENTS FOR A FOREWARD DEFENSE WHICH WOULD STOP AN INVATION AT THE BORDER -- A SIGN THAT THIS IS A SUBJECT OF CURRENT DEBATE IN CHINA.

11. HSU'S OTHER MAJOR TOPIC IS THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL AIR DEFENSE. THIS IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO PRESERVE STRENGTH, REDUCE LOSSES, AVOID DISORDER, AND ENABLE CHINESE DEFENDERS TO WAGE TUNNEL WARFARE. ALL CITIES WITH THE "PROPER CONDITIONS", NOT JUST THE LARGEST CITIES, SHOULD DIG CIVIL DEFENSE TUNNELS.

12. HSU MENTIONS TAIWAN ONLY ONCE WHEN HE CALLS FOR PREPARATIONS TO LIBERATE THE ISLAND. IN AN ARTICLE DEALING WITH CHINA'S OVERALL STRATEGIC POSTURE, THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PEKING 02350 02 OF 02 011012Z

THROW-AWAY REFERENCE IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT TAIWAN'S LIBERATION OCCUPIES A LOW PRIORITY IN PEKING'S CURRENT MILITARY THINNING.

13. COMMENT: IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS, HSU'S ARTICLE REVEALS A GROWING CHINESE PREOCCUPATION WITH THE THREAT TO CHINA OF SOVIET MOVES AROUND THE WORLD. IN CONTRAST, AS RECENTLY AS LAST FEBRUARY CHAIRMAN HUA, SPEAKING AS A "REVOLUTIONARY OPTIMIST", WAS DECLARING HE WAS NOT AFRAID OF WAR AND DISCUSSING THE SOVIET DANGER TO THE WORLD IN GENERAL, NOT SPECIFICALLY TO CHINA. THIS CHANGE IN TONE HAS ALREADY BEEN EVIDENT IN PRIVATE STATEMENTS MADE RECENTLY TO VISITING FOREIGNERS BY CHINESE OFFICIALS AND HAS BECOME MORE EXPLICIT IN CHINESE PUBLIC COMMENTARIES ON THE SOVIET THREAT IN RECENT MONTHS. IT IS NO DOUBT ATTRIBUTABLE AT LEAST IN PART TO THE PRC'S RECENT DIFFICUL-

TIES WITH VIETNAM.
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